

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
Evaluation of the Round 3 MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder
Group MPA Proposal Relative to Goal 3 of the Marine Life Protection Act
October 21, 2010

California Marine Life Protection Act, Goal 3:

“To improve recreational, educational, and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems that are subject to minimal human disturbance, and to manage these uses in a manner consistent with protecting biodiversity.”

(Subsection 2853(b)(3), California Fish and Game Code)

Background

In the MLPA North Coast Study Region (NCSR), staff members drafted a Goal 3 guidance document to assist stakeholders in addressing Goal 3 while designing their marine protected area (MPA) proposals. The guidance document outlined new evaluation methods designed by MLPA Initiative staff members to provide more information than Goal 3 evaluations have in previous study regions. The refined Goal 3 evaluation also better aligns with evaluations conducted by two state agencies, the California Department of Fish and Game and the California Department of Parks and Recreation. After an opportunity for public comment, the guidance document was finalized in May 2010 and the refined evaluation methods were implemented in Rounds 2 and 3 of the north coast MPA planning process.

Consistent with the guidance document, MPA proposals will be considered to adequately address Goal 3 if each of the three elements (recreational, educational and study opportunities) are improved in at least one MPA in each of the two bioregions in the NCSR. In order for an MPA to be considered in the Goal 3 evaluation, the stakeholders were required to specifically identify each Goal 3 MPA and explain how it contributes to one or more of the Goal 3 elements. This evaluation provides a summary of how well Proposal 0 (existing MPAs) and the Round 3 NCRSG MPA Proposal addressed Goal 3.

Proposal 0

Proposal 0 has 5 existing MPAs that could be considered to address Goal 3, and do address all three Goal 3 elements in the southern bioregion (see Table 1 and Map 1). However, Proposal 0 has no existing MPAs in the northern bioregion, so it does not address any Goal 3 opportunities for that bioregion (see Map 1).

Table 1. MPAs in Proposal 0 that contribute to Goal 3

MPA	Bioregion ¹	Recreational	Educational	Study
Punta Gorda SMR	Southern			Yes
MacKerricher SMCA	Southern	Yes	Yes	
Point Cabrillo SMCA	Southern	Yes	Yes	Yes
Russian Gulch SMCA	Southern	Yes	Yes	
Van Damme SMCA	Southern	Yes	Yes	
Total MPAs in Northern Bioregion		0	0	0
Total MPAs in Southern Bioregion		4	4	2
Total MPAs		4	4	2

¹The Northern Bioregion extends from the California/Oregon border to the Mattole River. The Southern Bioregion extends from Mattole River to Alder Creek.

Round 3 NCRSG MPA Proposal

The Round 3 NCRSG MPA Proposal has twelve MPAs identified as contributing to Goal 3; six in the northern bioregion and six in the southern bioregion (see Table 2 and Map 2). The even distribution of MPAs in each of the bioregions helps ensure that Goal 3 opportunities are available throughout the study region. The proposal fully meets the Goal 3 guidelines by including at least one MPA in each bioregion that improves recreational, educational, or study opportunities. Four MPAs improved multiple Goal 3 elements; two of those improved all three Goal 3 elements. At the study region scale, a large number of Goal 3 MPAs improved study opportunities and/or recreational opportunities with more study opportunities offered in the northern bioregion and more recreational opportunities offered in the southern bioregion.

A number of MPAs included in the Round 3 NCRSG MPA Proposal did receive a lower level of protection (LOP) from the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) due to the accommodation of tribal uses. These LOPs were taken into consideration during the Goal 3 evaluation and specifically impacted whether an MPA was considered to improve study opportunities. In general, most MPAs identified as contributing to study opportunities had higher LOPs. Pyramid Point SMCA was an MPA identified by the stakeholders as improving study opportunities, but it was not included for that element given its lower level of protection. Some MPAs with lower LOPs were identified as contributing to study opportunities if they were accessible and had existing monitoring efforts or monitoring sites.

The Round 3 NCRSG MPA Proposal did improve upon Goal 3 evaluation relative to draft MPA proposals developed in Round 2. Two issues found in the Round 2 evaluations were 1) most draft MPA proposals did not address educational opportunities for the northern bioregion and 2) many Round 2 MPAs did not provide sufficient information for how they contribute to Goal 3. The NCRSG addressed both these issues in its Round 3 proposal and as such the Goal 3 guidelines have been met and improved relative to Proposal 0 and Round 2 draft MPA proposals.

Table 2. MPAs in the Round 3 NCRSG MPA Proposal that contribute to Goal 3

Proposed MPA	Bioregion ¹	Recreational	Educational	Study
Pyramid Point SMCA	Northern	Yes		
Point St. George Reef Offshore SMCA	Northern			Yes
Reading Rock SMCA	Northern			Yes
South Humboldt Bay SMRMA	Northern	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Cape Mendocino SMR	Northern			Yes
Mattole Canyon SMR	Northern			Yes
Sea Lion Gulch SMR	Southern			Yes
Ten Mile SMR	Southern	Yes		Yes
Ten Mile Estuary SMRMA	Southern	Yes		
Point Cabrillo SMR	Southern	Yes	Yes	Yes
Big River Estuary SMP	Southern	Yes	Yes	
Navarro River Estuary SMRMA	Southern	Yes		
Total MPAs in Northern Bioregion		2	1	5
Total MPAs in Southern Bioregion		5	2	3
Total MPAs		7	3	8

²The Northern Bioregion extends from the California/Oregon border to the Mattole River. The Southern Bioregion extends from Mattole River to Alder Creek.

Conclusions

The Round 3 NCRSG MPA Proposal fully meets the Goal 3 guidelines by including at least one MPA in each bioregion that improves recreational, educational or study opportunities. Additionally, the NCRSG MPA Proposal improves Goal 3 opportunities throughout the study region, as evidenced by the even division of Goal 3 MPAs between the two bioregions.

Acronyms Used in this Document

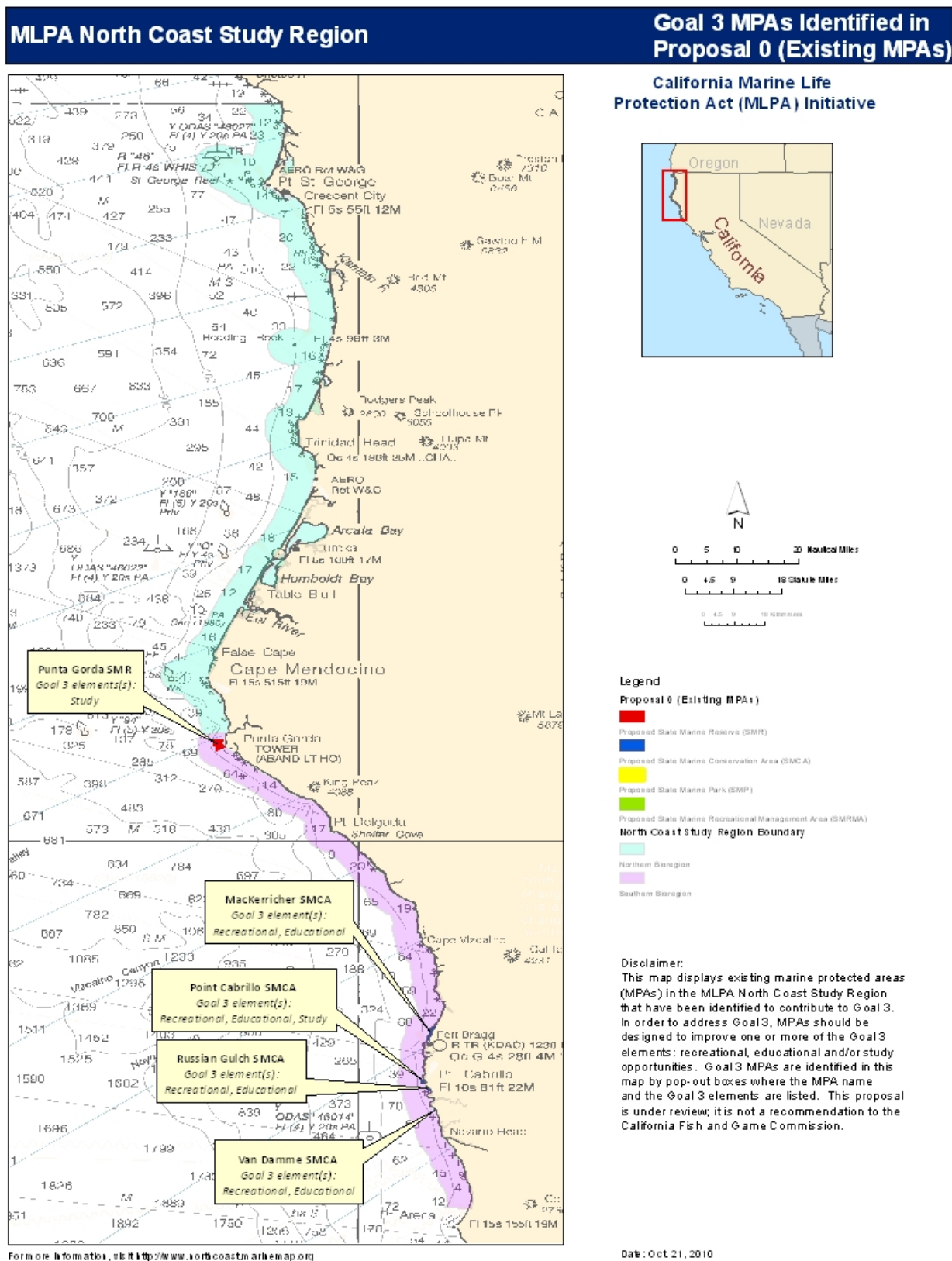
SMCA = state marine conservation area

SMP = state marine park

SMR = state marine reserve

SMRMA = state marine recreational management area

Map 1: MPAs Identified in Proposal 0 that Contribute to Goal 3



Map 2. MPAs Identified in the Round 3 NCRSG MPA Proposal that Contribute to Goal 3

